

## [Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Brodbeck, Sr.]

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### FORM A Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER Ruby E. Wilson ADDRESS North Platte

DATE Oct. 31, 1938 SUBJECT Folklore

1. Name and address of informant Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Brodbeck Sr. West 4th St. North Platte
2. Date and time of interview
3. Place of interview Their home
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc. A very comfortable large family home.

### FORM B Personal History of Informant

NAME OF WORKER Ruby E. Wilson ADDRESS North Platte

DATE Oct. 31, 1938 SUBJECT Folklore

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Mr. & Mrs. Chas. Brodbeck Sr.

1. Ancestry German

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2. Place and date of birth [Witenberg?] Germany 1860
3. Family 8 boys
4. Place lived in, with dates Germany, Pittsburg Penna. Chicago 1880 Omaha '81
5. Education, with dates Graduated and confirmed at age of 14, learned butcher trade and apprenticed 14-18.
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates Farm at 14-18 learned the butcher trade
7. Special skills and interests Has [acumulated?] a substantial background.
8. Community and religious activities Lutheran
9. Description of informant Is German type, wears grey modified walrus mustache, has been injured in auto accident and has crippled hand, talks decidedly broken and accented English.
10. Other points gained in interview When Mr. Brodbeck's memory failed him or he was at a loss to express himself he called authoratively to his wife who was in the kitchen. "Oh Mrs. I need you" and upon obtaining the desired information he would stop her enthusiastic tale of the old country [?] by a curt "Be still, I tell it now, upon which she would scuttle for the kitchen only to soon be called "Oh Mrs. I need you" again and again. She always came cheerfully and launched enthausastically into talk of the old country and just as obediently gave her husband the floor each time he demanded [same?]. But I conceived the idea that she loved to talk of the old country and perceived that her memory and wit in translating expressions was much more nimble than Mr. Brodbecks, so I waited till another day and upon catching the old boy (with all due respect to him) down town I hustled up to the home and got the folkstory which I thought very beautiful. I especially appreciated her expressions such as "we bake our good rye [?] and wheat bread" "I think of the mills in the

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old country and the beautiful streams.” “ [?] ladies mixed it in a large wood trough. There have been bad /# times and good times silver and dark ones—— lots of them.”

I enjoyed every moment with this old couple but I loved the patient kindness on that German mothers face (I am not German) the Dresden quality of her complexion by artificial light, including, her hair and eyes and with all the cheerful obedience and I was secretly much delighted with her excellent wit and quick intelligence.

Mr. Brodbeck I believe is a kindly man, fine example of a satisfactory and successful immigrant, a good business man, being the founder of the cities leading retail meat market, a good father and a genuine [autocrat?] in the old country way of his household.

### FORM C Text of Interview

NAME OF WORKER Ruby E. Wilson ADDRESS N. Platte

DATE Oct. 31, 1938 SUBJECT Folklore

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Mr. Mrs. Chas. Brodbeck Srl.

I was born in Germany. I came to [Pittsbur?] Pittsburg Pennsylvania then to Chicago in 1880 and to Omaha in 1881. I worked for Mr. Haynes in the butcher business until '87 I took a timber claim 15 miles north of N. Platte but we never lived on it.

Bratt and Haynes were [?] cattle and meat men and I worked for them as their butcher until in '87 I started in business for myself.

The money panic [??] on in '91 and '92, I had just started business in '87 and it was hard. We worked hard too. They didn't have sale barns then. We had to go out all over the country and buy the cattle and drive them in, there were no trucks to bring them in. We worked hard.

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("Mr. Brodbeck was a good man in his day." said Mrs. Brodbeck)

Once I went out and I got lost on the prairie in a storm and was gone for [3?] days.

Got acquainted in N. Platte with Mrs. Brodbeck, we were married 50 years Jan. 1, 1938.

"There have been bad times and good times, dark ones and light ones— silver and dark ones, lots of them." The war took all 3 boys. William was in Germany and came back gassed and died in 7 years.

I worked for the Railroad after the silver panic then went back into the butcher business and we always worked hard., from 6 in the morning 'till 9 at night. In the old country you couldn't apprentice right away. Here they don't want to learn first but there you served 2 years the [?] before you got a paper or certificate that you were an apprentice. I also graduated and was confirmed in the Lutheran faith in the old country. It is better here that they have the high schools and there only people with much money could pay to have their children get much education.

There were 8 boys in the family and my father hired a traylor tailor to come and make the clothes. When I was going to be confirmed I had to have a suit. The tailor came to the house and made my suit of brown real wool broadcloth. He took 2 days to make it and I was 14 years old. We didn't buy anything, we had it made right at home, the tailor made it by hand, take the measure of every person.

[Shoos?] the same way the [shoomaker?] took your measure and made your [shoos?] in about 5 days and they wore you about a year. They were all hand made.

I was raised to farm, in the old country the village has the farms outside around it and you go out to farm. I helped make the hay and we haul a wagon load of hay along the road and there the fruit trees grow closed close along the road and high together. On the wagon load of hay you can pick the [peas?] and apples off the trees.

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Harvest time was done by the scythe and some times the cycle, and it was tied in sheaths or bundles with a few straws knitted together thus— and knotted around the bundle by the heads. Then the wheat was stacked up under a shelter 20 feet wide and about 100 feet long on a platform made of packed clay. Then 8 or 10 head of cattle were driven over the wheat to thrash it and it was turned and tramped until it was all thrashed. Or some times it was done by a flail with about 4 men in bunch or women too helped thrash and “these old flails would just go”. The thrashing was done in the winter when there wasn't anything to do and the wheat was put in “shire” till winter time. After the thrashing the grain was sold to the mills miller except what was needed at home and he came and got it with a 4 horse team and brot back what was to be returned that he had ground but not bought. Flour is milled at a water power wheel that grinds slow slow around and over, the mills are all water powered by the river.

“(Mrs. Brodbeck)” They The song here they sing what you call “Old Mill Stream” when I hear I always think of the mills [in the?] old country and the beautiful streams there.”

Then when the flour is back we bake our good rye or wheat bread and we had barley flour too makes a dark color bread. We had a starter, my grandmother kept here in a little wooden keg and we always saved it back, a chunk of dough and we started the bread in the afternoon and then 2 ladies mixed it in a [?] big wood trough and tended it making it into loaves when it was raised. There was a big oven and a baker man and he baked the bread for everbody everybody in the village. It was a big oven like a furnace with brick and clay packed round over it. The loaves were put into the oven with a big scoop shovel. You baked about 2 24 loaves or more, it just depended on the size family and mabe you would loan some loaves to somebody that might run out or if you ran out before your next bake day you might borrow. Every body had a bake day and you only baked every two or three weeks on your day and got up early about 4 o'clock and one side of the village would bake one time and the other parts of the village other times.

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When the loaves were baked you took them home and stored them on shelves or racks in the barn and they stayed good till you baked again.

We raised our own hemp an flax for our own use. When it was grown in September we pulled it and harvested it ou out of the ground then when it was dry the stems were stripped and husked and in the winter 2 girls, one at each end with combs work it and straighten it and spin and card it and it is woven on looms and then it is bleached by the river on grass where the sun shines you keep it sprinkled and it bleaches snow white in the sun. You make lots of cloths and had linen and everything out oof of/# it the "Hanal" (?) is shipped and you can get it in Omaha to knit with.

The towns or villages are about 4 or 5 miles apart there and the farms are outside.

I retired about 4 years ago and turned the cattle ranch over to Harry and the meat market to Louis and Carl they know how to butcher as well as I and they been in the market along with me but it is easier now than it used to be.

We danced sometimes, the "Dutch waltz" and the Blue Danube, [?] everybody danced on the ground or under the shine or barn after the thrashing.